

MERCATOR:

OR,

Commerce Retrieved;

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Tuesday, June 23. to Thursday, June 25. 1713.

The unaccountable changing of Opinions in the Case of the French Trade, proceeds from Party, not Reason or Judgment.

Impossible we can be Losers by the French Trade, when our Goods go into France under low Duties, and theirs come all here under high Duties.

The French Merchants and Manufacturers made Representations to the King of France against this Treaty, as Destructive to their own Manufactures.

They have more Reason to Rejoyce at the Articles not being made Effectual, than our People have.

THE last *MERCATOR* gave a Sketch of the miserable Condition our Trade to France is now reduc'd to: That our People may see, who has Imposed upon them, and who not.

Before the Debate of the French Trade became a Party-Business, and those, who have taken so much pains to Divide us, drew Matters of Commerce into their other Strifes; the whole Kingdom esteem'd the Trade to France a very valuable and profitable Trade, or at least capable of being made so. The Memorials and Representations presented to her Majesty, and the Lords Commissioners of Trade, which are now to be produced, and which were actually laid before the House of Commons, prove this undeniably.

If Party had not had an eminent share in the change of Mens Minds, it would be very difficult to assign the Causes or Reasons for these Peoples altering their Opinion of the French Trade; all that they Requested, in order to make it an advantageous Trade, having been OBTAINED in the Treaty; and all that they Objected, as obstructing its being Advantageous, having been REMOVED by the Treaty.

The Bristol Merchants, the Exeter Merchants, the Levant Merchants; and Universally all, that have made Representations on this Affair, have given it under their Hands, that if such and such Things can be obtain'd, if such and such Evils can be removed, the French Trade would be very Advantageous and Gainful to the Kingdom: There is not One of those Requests which are not Effectually answer'd; not One of the Evils which they give Caution of, but what are Provided against: Out of their own Mouths they are Condemn'd, who Complain of a Trade after it has been Regulated by their own Rules and Requests; which

Trade they affirm'd, under their Hands, would be very beneficial and advantageous to this Kingdom, and which they desir'd to have Regulated, in order, it is hoped, to be Preserv'd, not Destroy'd.

This Paper cannot allow the Repetition of these Things, but their Requests are already largely set forth, and an Account given, how the Things they Desired have been Granted, and the Mischiefs they Complained of Provided against, and prevented: For which see *MERCATOR*, (No. 3, 5, and 7.) It is therefore unaccountable, that those Men can satisfy themselves to open their Mouths against the Treaty, or join in the popular and inconsistent Joy, which some People shew, at the Delay of the making it Effectual.

But the Divisions among us having extended so far, as unhappily to reach this Affair; which in Truth has not, nor ought to have any Concern with the Parties into which we are so fatally Divided: It leaves us no longer in doubt, or to seek for the Reason, why some People are against this Treaty, who, there is good Cause to believe, had they been Concern'd in the making it themselves, would have discovered other Thoughts about it.

These Things are so evident to the Understandings of those Concern'd on the other side of the Argument, that the Merchants and Manufacturers in France have been as much alarm'd at this Treaty of Commerce as ours; and it may be said without any Partiality, that it is with much more Reason: But it would be very difficult to find out Arguments to Support the Complaints in France, and these in England also.

There have been divers Representations made to the King of France himself, by his own Subjects, as well Merchants and Manufacturers, as others, all against the Treaty



Treaty of Commerce with Great-Britain, and especially against the Eighth and Ninth Articles, the same which our People are so offended with; Complaining, and with great Earnestness too, against admitting the English Woollen Manufactures into France upon the low Duties of 1664, as what will be Ruinous to the Manufactures set up with so great Success in France; For that the English will now bring in all their Woollen Manufactures upon them in such great Quantities, that those made in Languedoc, in Poitou, in Picardy, and other Places, will be Ruined; That the English make those Goods so much better than they can be made in France, and they will be so Cheap, the high Duties, which his Majesty had laid on, not so much to enrich his Treasury, as to encourage the Industry of his own Subjects, being taken off, even as far back as the Tariff of 1664, that the French Goods will find no Sale; but that the English Goods will in proportion to their Goodness, be Sold much Cheaper, than any can be made in France. Farther, These Representations go on in very pressing, tho' humble Terms, it being spoken to their King, to Complain, that an open Trade with England will always be to the great Damage and Loss of the French; for, say they, the French Nation has very few Goods to send to the English, but whereof other Nations have the like kinds, and do also Import the same into England; But the English have divers Goods to send to France, of which no other Nation can send the like; That is to say, Lead, Tin, Leather, Allom, Coal, Pilchards, Salmon, and several other kinds; whereas the Wines of France are supplied to the English by Portugal, the Brandies by Spain, the Wrought Silks by Genoa and the Dury of Milan, the Fruits and Perfumes by Italy, and the Linen and Paper by Hamburgh and Holland.

For this Reason they represent, that the Treaty of Commerce with Great-Britain, as it is now fixed, would be Destructive, and an entire Ruin to the Trade of the French Nation; concluding, that France can never recover its Wealth and Greatness, if such a Treaty of Commerce should be permitted to take Place, and unless some Way be found out to continue the high Duties, and thereby to keep out the English Manufactures from being permitted to come into France.

These Representations seem to rally the English, for what they call a Stupidity incredible, that they prohibited Trading with France, at the beginning of the first War; by which, say they, the Manufactures of France have arrived to a great Height, which it was impossible should have been, if the English Woollen Manufactures had continued to have been sent into France; and insinuate, that it should have been the Most Christian King, not the late King William, who should have caused a Prohibition of Trade to have been published, for that the English Trade was the only Destructive thing to the Industry of the French Nation.

These Arguments are so pungent, and carry with them so much Weight, that it makes a most pointed Satyr upon the French King, that he sh:uld not comply with their Desires; but it must be acknowledged, that if their Reasons are just on the French Side, it will

be hard to find, that our Complaints of this Trade can be Reasonable on the other Side, for it is hardly Rational to suggest, that the Trade between these Two Nations can be to the Disadvantage and Loss on both Sides.

This Paper might confirm these things from sundry other Complaints made in France, of a private Nature, which serve to prove, that the Opinion in general of the Trading part of France, is, that the Treaty of Commerce is prodigiously Disadvantageous to the French: But, as it has been resolved at first, that what is said here shall be taken from Authentick Vouchers and Original Papers, no notice shall be taken of those Papers, which we see handed about here from France, tho' they tend very much to giving Weight to this Argument, and in themselves are very Convincing.

It cannot be doubted, but that the French Manufacturers spoke very Feelingly, when they Represented to their King how fatal to their own Manufactures it would necessarily be, to have the British Woollen Goods admitted there upon the foot of the Tariff of 1664. They are sensible, that altho' it may be true, that the Manufactures they have Erected have found Encouragement, yet that the great Encouragement of all, and without which they could have made but small Progrefs, has been the Prohibitions of the British Manufactures, of which the last *MERCATOR* gave an Account; as also the high Duties charged upon them before that, which made English Goods always so Dear, as discouraged the Consumption: But when these Duties shall be taken off, and the English Goods shall be admitted into France, as they were in the Year 1664, all their Manufactories and Undertakings of that Nature, will gradually sink, and the Markets be filled with English Goods; and as this is the Opinion of the French Merchants and Manufacturers themselves, there is no room to question, but their Joy at the Delay of making these Articles Effectual in England, is equal to any, that could be expressed here, and on a much more reasonable Foundation.

The next *MERCATOR* shall Examine the fatal Consequences to our Commerce, and especially to our Manufactures of our past Prohibitions of the French Trade, and remove a popular Mistake, which our People are led into (viz.) that our Manufactures are to be admitted into France, but at Three Ports only; in explaining which, all the Inferences drawn from that wrong Supposition, will of themselves come to nothing.

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